revival plan has been approved by the Government recently. The short term revival plan revolves around completion of two partly constructed vessels viz. 400-Pax-cum-100 Ton cargo vessel of Andaman & Nicobar Admn. & Lighthouse Tender Vessel of Deptt. of Lighthouses & Lightships. For effective execution of the vessels a Monitoring Committee is being formed. Regarding long term revival plan, Government has engaged M/s. SCICI Ltd. (now M/s. ICICI Ltd.) to carry out the long term revival study of Hooghly Dock & Port Engineers Ltd. M/s. ICICI Ltd. is likely to submit its final report shortly.

**Irrigation in Assam**

2890. SHRI DWARKA NATH DAS : Will the Minister of WATER RESORUCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government are aware that farmers of Assam reap only two harvests in a year due to lack of irrigation;

(b) whether the Government are also aware that in Assam 40 percent of the total cultivable land needs irrigation but only 5 percent is irrigated; and

(c) the measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government for adequate irrigation in Assam so that farmers could reap four harvests in a year ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SIS RAM OLA) : (a) On an average farmers of Assam reap two harvests in a year.

(b) As per Land Use Statistics of Ministry of Agriculture brought out for the year 1993-94 (latest), the net irrigated area out of total cultivable Land in Assam constitutes about 17.7 per cent.

(c) With a view to provide further irrigation facilities in Assam, 4 Major and 9 Medium irrigation projects are under implementation in Assam. Also 6 Medium projects and 7 Extension, Renovation & Modernisation (ERM) schemes have been proposed to be taken up in the Ninth Five Year Plan. Morever, in addition to Plan allocations, Central Loan Assistance of Rs. 5.23 crores has been provided to Assam during 1996-97 under Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) for expeditious completion of 6 on-going irrigation projects in the State of Assam.

**Petrol Pumps**

2891. SHRI RAM NAIK : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that the petrol pumps in Maharashtra remained closed on July 3, 1997;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether revised commission after hike of the petrol pumps was not paid to the pump owners; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and the time by which the arrears are likely to be paid;

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The basic demand of the dealers is an upward revision of dealers' commission, consequent to revision in the price of petrol and diesel during July, 1996.

(c) and (d) The revised commission, based on the applicable formula, consequent to the revision in the prices, was paid to the dealers. However the dealers have been representing or a revision in the formula, for which the Government have constituted a Committee consisting of Director (Marketing) of oil marketing companies, to study and recommend revision in the dealers commission. Further action is to be taken on receipt of the Committee's report.

**Thiruvananthapuram Airport**

2892. SHRI K.V. SURENDRA NATH : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it has come to the notice of the Ministry that Air India Flights from Gulf countries are landing at Thiruvananthapuram International Airport without baggage several times during the past two months; and

(b) whether the Government would enquire into the matter and find necessary solutions to the problem ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Baggage is offloaded on some days due to high temperature in the Gulf resulting in payload restriction.

*[Translation]*

**Load Bearing Capacity on N.H. 8**

2893. SHRI TARACHAND BHAGORA : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether vehicles are plying on Delhi-Jaipur-

Ajmer-Udaipur on Ahmedabad route on National Highway No.8 daily more than the load bearing capacity of this highway.

(b) if so, the number and ratio of these vehicles; and

(c) the measures being taken by the Government to remove this discrepancy ?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) and (b) The section of National Highway No.8 in question is carrying about 10,000 to 35,000 Passenger-Car-Units (PCUs) against the capacity norms of 15,000 PCUs per day for two laned road.

(c) The construction/development of National Highways is a continuous process. Out of 972 km length of the Delhi-Ahmedabad segment of N.H. 8, four laning of 141 km has already been completed and that for another 126 km is in various stages of completed and that for another 126 km is in various stages of progress. However, for widening the remaining length to four lane carriageway under BOT (Build-Operate-Transfer) basis, feasibility study has been initiated by the National Highways Authority of India working under the administrative control of the Ministry.

*[English]*

**Joint Venture with Foreign Firms**

2894. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :
SHRIMATI LAKSHMI PANABAKA :

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Hindustan Shipyard has explored the possibility of Joint Venture proposals with foreign companies;

(b) whether an agreement with the Norwegian Company has been finalised;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the State owned Hindustan Shipyard has accumulated losses to the order of Rs. 994 crores at present; and

(e) the time by which the offers of the foreign firms for reviving the Hindustan Shipyard are likely to be considered ?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Accumulated loss as per audited figures available for 1995-96 is Rs. 845.583 crores. The Government has recently restructured the capital base of the company by writing off of Govt. loans and interest thereon to the extent of Rs. 470.93 crores and conversion into equity to the tune of Rs. 120.20 crores.

(e) Action has since been initiated to examine the offer of Norwegian firm for Joint Venture.

**Ravva Oil Field**

2895. SHRI YELLAIAH NANDI : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the gas produced at Raava oilfield in the Krishna-Godavari basin would be piped to down stream consumers;

(b) whether an agreement was signed between the Gas Authority of India, Raava Joint Venture and Vedeocon Petroleum with the Union Government in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the extent to which it is likely to benefit to the consumers in the State ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU) : (a) to (c) A gas sale contract has been signed on the 27th June, 1997 between Gas Authority of India Limited, nominee of Govt. of India and Ravva joint venture of Videocon Petroleum Ltd., Command Petroleum India and Ravva Oil (Singapore). About 0.7 MMSCMD of gas shall be supplied under this contract to meet the requirement of downstream consumers including power and fertilizer plants in Andhra Pradesh.

**Conservation of Endangered Species**

2896. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a research centre for the conservation of the endangered species, is being set up at Hyderabad in collaboration with Central Zoo Authority of India;

(b) if so, whether India would be the third country which will have such a centre;

(c) the total amount involved in setting up this centre; and